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U.S. EMBARRASSED AS SECRET PLAN TO ATTACK YEMEN LEAKED TO MEDIA

A journalist was accidentally included in a group chat where top US officials were discussing upcoming strikes against Yemen's Houthi rebels

'HIGHLY DAMAGING' SITUATION BARELY AVOIDED

The plan was leaked to *The Atlantic* magazine's editor-in-chief Jeffrey Goldberg, who was inadvertently added to a Signal app chat with top officials like VP J D Vance, Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and CIA Director John Ratcliffe. The leak could have been highly damaging if the enemy somehow accessed to the plan

WHY WAS SIGNAL, A COMMERCIAL APP, USED?

- Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a post on X on Tuesday that "no 'war plans' were discussed" and "no classified material was sent"
- But top Democrats condemned the breach, saying it was illegal and calling for an investigation to find out why officials were using a commercially available app for sensitive discussions | **P12**

2 days

BEFORE THE ACTUAL AIRSTRIKE WAS WHEN GOLDBERG WAS ADDED

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

FROSTY TIES

Intent, ability in India to interfere with polls: Canada

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

INDIA has the 'intent and capability' to interfere in Canadian communities and democratic processes, a media report said quoting Vanessa Lloyd, the deputy director of operations at the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

Lloyd claimed that China, Russia and Pakistan, too, could interfere in the federal election campaign. She was addressing a media briefing on Monday on efforts to protect the integrity of the general election, voting for which takes place on April 28. Lloyd added that "hostile state actors" were increasingly leveraging AI to meddle in the polls announced by Prime Minister Mark Carney on Sunday.

Under a federal protocol introduced in 2019, the news channel CTV News said, a panel of bureaucrats had the power to warn the public if it decided one or more incidents threaten Canada's ability to hold a free and fair vote.

Most threat actors 'likely have adapted their tradecraft to conceal foreign interference activity, making it even more challenging to detect', Lloyd mentioned, adding that it was 'highly likely' China would use social media to promote narratives favourable to its interests and target Chinese ethnic, cultural and religious communities in Canada using "clandestine and deceptive" means.

The Ministry of External Affairs has so far not responded to these charges. But in January, the nation rejected "insinuations" levelled by a Canadian commission report of interference in the 2022 election of Pierre Poilievre, the Conservative Party leader.

Himachal Pradesh HC Chief Justice G S Sandhawalia, a member of the panel set up by the SC, arrives at Justice Yashwant Varma's residence, in New Delhi on Tuesday | PTI

SC panel begins 'currency stash' probe, visits site

Committee inspects Justice Varma's house where burnt cash was allegedly discovered

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY & NAMITA BAJPAI @ New Delhi / Lucknow

THE Supreme Court-appointed committee on Tuesday began its probe into the discovery of cash from the residence of Delhi High Court judge Yashwant Varma, even as the Allahabad High Court Bar Association started an indefinite strike in protest against the proposed transfer of the tainted judge to the Allahabad HC.

The probe panel members—Justice Sheel Nagu, Chief Justice of the High Court of Punjab and Haryana; Justice G S Sandhawalia, Chief Justice of the High Court of Himachal Pradesh; and Anu Sivaraman, Judge of the High Court of Karnataka—reached Justice Varma's official residence at 30, Tughlak Crescent, in Delhi at 1 pm. They spent around 45 minutes there and examined the room where the stash of cash was allegedly found, sources said.

It was not immediately known whether Justice Varma was at his residence when the inquiry panel visited.

The panel's findings will be crucial in deciding the fate of Justice Varma, who is facing allegations of corruption following the discovery of cash at his home following a fire incident on the night of March 14.

Justice Varma, who has since been de-rostered by the Delhi High Court, has denied the allegations against him terming the whole affair a conspiracy.

The SC Collegium on Monday confirmed that it had recommended Justice Varma's transfer to the Allahabad HC, triggering fiery protests from the bar association, which urged the Central government not to clear the Collegium's decision.

> There have been attempts to cover up... Until a resolution is reached, we won't resume work, no matter consequences
>
> Allahabad HC Bar Association

Bar association chief Anil Tiwari said the protest is not against any court but against those who betrayed the judicial system.

Meanwhile, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday held a meeting of floor leaders to discuss judicial accountability in the wake of the developments. The meeting came a day after Dhankhar interacted with Leader of the House J P Nadda and Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge, and referred to the mechanism for judicial appointments after the passage of the NJAC Act in 2014, which the SC later struck down. **P10**

Now, AI-based attendance for govt staff

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

MARKING attendance by signing the ledger or placing the finger on the biometric device could soon be passe. The state government is all set to introduce the Karnataka Advanced Attendance Management System (KAAMS) at all its departments which is enabled by artificial intelligence and geographic information system. Employees will have to mark their attendance by clicking a selfie from their mobile phone on their office premises and their attendance is captured real time. This AI-enabled attendance system is said to be first of its kind for any government office in the country.

The state government has over 70 departments where over five lakh employees work. Most departments now have the biometric attendance system, where employees swipe their card or keep their finger on the biometric device to mark attendance. A few departments, where teachers are working (both in government schools and colleges), still manage with the traditional method of signing the ledger.

Sources said it is possible to manipulate the biometric attendance system. Staff may damage the equipment or resort to some other tactic to hide their irregular attendance. But the latest KAAMS, developed by the Centre for e-Governance at the Department for Personnel and Administrative Reforms (DPAR), is geofence-enabled, making it almost impossible to tamper with. Pankaj Kumar Pandey, Principal Secretary, DPAR (e-governance), said this system enables real time attendance and gives no scope for manipulation.

The pilot was run at some places in the health department. Shreevyas HM, Project Director, Artificial Intelligence Cell, CEG, told The New Indian Express that in some government hospitals and primary health centres, doctors were not available at designated places. But with the new system, they had to mark their attendance in person and they could not fabricate it.

Explaining how it works, Shreevyas said employees have to download KAAMS, a mobile application, and have to register one time through their Aadhaar. **P5**

Waste collection may be hit as truck cleaners, drivers to protest from today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

WASTE collection may be hit across Bengaluru from Wednesday as thousands of cleaners and drivers with the Bangalore Solid Waste Management Ltd (BSWML), a waste management wing of BBMP, have threatened to go on strike, seeking regularisation of their services.

Thyagaraj, president of the Karmika Samrakshane organisation fighting for their cause, said DCM and Bengaluru Development Minister DK Shivakumar had promised to look into their issue four months ago. But there has been no progress. Around 10,000 cleaners and drivers are working on contract basis, he said.

A garbage vehicle parked near St John's Road junction | VINODKUMAR

"We have been neglected by the government and BBMP. We keep the city clean and risk our lives, but there is no hope of the government making them either permanent staff of the BBMP's solid waste management division or give them direct payment," said Thyagaraj. These workers are now paid by BBMP garbage contractors.

Their representatives said they met Shivakumar at least four times and had requested him to at least give them direct payment and free them from the clutches of contractors.

"On Wednesday, we will assemble at the BBMP head office, march to Freedom Park and sit on an indefinite strike. We hope that our concerns will be addressed in the BBMP budget that will be presented on Thursday. That is the reason we have decided to protest from Wednesday," he said.

Police did not file FIR soon after widow was stripped

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Belagavi

IT has come to light that the Belagavi district police did not register a case in connection with an incident that took place at Harlapur, near Saundatti, where a widow was allegedly stripped and assaulted by a group of people during a fight between them over a land dispute a month ago (February 20).

When a section of the media reported on how the woman was stripped and assaulted by the group, the CM's Office took serious cognisance of the incident and directed the Belagavi police to file an FIR.

The widow, talking to *TNIE*, alleged that the group of people which was brought by her relatives tore her clothes and assaulted her. She said some of her family members who came to her rescue were also assaulted. She charged that she went to the local police station in Saundatti taluk soon after the incident, but the police failed to register a case. But Belagavi SP Bhimashankar Guled said the woman was not stripped when she got into an argument with the group, which objected to her claims over owning a piece of agricultural land at Harlapur.

Guled said police officials from Saundatti taluk registered an FIR and a team of police officials rushed to the spot after the incident at Harlapur.

Sources said the woman was stripped and assaulted after she stopped the group from entering the land where she was farming. The group that involves her relatives had staked claim to the same piece of land and that led to the clash.

Sources said the woman also tried to set herself ablaze during the clash. A release from the CM's office on Tuesday stated that a widow was stripped and assaulted by a group of people over a land dispute at Harlapur. "A section of the media had reported about the failure of the police to file an FIR even after the widow had gone to the police station in torn clothes. An officer from the CM's office took a serious cognisance of this incident and directed police officials in Belagavi district to file an FIR. Eventually, the police filed an FIR against the accused," it stated.

SAMSUNG

SLAPPED WITH $601 MN TAX CLAIM

The government has ordered Samsung and its executives to pay $601 mn in back taxes and penalities for evading tariffs on imported telecom equipment | **P13**

FREE SPEECH FURY

KAMRA DEFIES SUMMONS, REFUSES TO APOLOGISE

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

THE Mumbai Police on Monday summoned stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra for questioning the next day over a case registered against him for lampooning Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde during a recent performance in Mumbai.

However, Kamra refused to appear immediately, citing death threats and concerns for his safety. He reportedly requested a week's time to comply. Kamra also took to social media and said he had no reason to apologise since he had only repeated what deputy chief minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar had already said.

The police, investigating whether Kamra was compensated to mock Shinde, have registered a case under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and are examining his phone and call records.

The controversy erupted after Kamra's performance, in which he parodied the song *Bholi Si Surat* to call Shinde a *gaddar* (traitor), referencing his 2022 rebellion against Uddhav Thackeray. Following the video's release, Shiv Sena workers vandalised a comedy club and demanded its closure. Eleven workers were arrested and later granted bail. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) also demolished part of the club. Kamra defended the comedy club, saying a venue is not responsible for a comedian's words.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut defended Kunal Kamra saying he had not said anything new. "...Kamra has spoken and repeated the truth and fact only," Raut said.

> I do not fear the mob. I wouldn't go under my bed waiting for the controversy to die down
>
> Kunal Kamra

Kamra trolls BMC

Addressing trolls, Kunal Kamra left a voicemail featuring his song, *Hum Honge Kangaal* (we shall be bankrupt) and mocked BMC by saying that his next show will be held at a place which needs to be razed

EXPRESS READ

Honeytrap row: Rajanna submits plea to Dr G

BENGALURU: Cooperation Minister KN Rajanna submitted a petition to Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara, alleging a honeytrap attempt on him and sought an investigation. Rajanna had alleged recently in the Assembly that 48 MLAs have been honeytrapped, and his statement created a political furore in Karnataka | **P4**

India, China hold diplomatic talks

NEW DELHI: India and China on Tuesday held a fresh edition of diplomatic dialogue in Chinese capital Beijing, focusing on ensuring effective border management and early resumption of cross-border cooperation and exchanges including on trans-border rivers and Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra.

Will meet revenue targets despite income tax relief, says Nirmala

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE government could 'realistically' achieve personal income tax collection targets despite offering huge tax relief, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday while responding to the debate on Budget in the Lok Sabha. The House passed the Finance Bill 2025—the piece of legislation that gives legal backing to the tax proposals and other fiscal measures announced in the Budget—with 35 amendments.

"The Finance Bill provides unprecedented tax relief to honour taxpayers. We have recognised their contribution," Sitharaman said.

In the FY26 Budget, the government increased the threshold for income tax rebate to ₹12 lakh per from ₹7 lakh earlier. For salaried taxpayers, this threshold jumped to ₹12.75 lakh per year after taking into account ₹75,000 standard deduction. The government also tweaked the tax slabs to benefit a large section of taxpayers.

The changes would lead to loss of tax revenue of ₹1 lakh crore. However, the government has increased the personal income tax collection target for FY26 by 14.14%. "The projected tax collections for FY26 are based on solid data," Sitharaman said.

With the passage of the Finance Bill 2025, the Lok Sabha completed its part of the Budgetary approval process. The Budget process for FY26 will be complete after the Rajya Sabha also approves it.

NEW INCOME TAX BILL IN MONSOON SESSION

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said that the new Income Tax Bill, which has been referred to a standing committee of Parliament, would most likely be taken up for discussion in the monsoon session of Parliament